



California Department of
Social Services



Child Care Advocate Program

CHILD CARE CENTER SELF ASSESSMENT GUIDE

SAFE FOOD HANDLING AND PREPARATION LICENSING REQUIREMENTS AND BEST PRACTICES



COMMUNITY CARE LICENSING DIVISION
“Promoting Healthy, Safe and
Supportive Community Care”

**CHILD CARE CENTER
SELF-ASSESSMENT GUIDE**

**SAFE FOOD HANDLING AND PREPARATION
LICENSING REQUIREMENTS AND BEST PRACTICES**

Safe practices in food handling, cooking, and storage are essential to prevent food borne illness and for providing healthy food for children. This guide identifies licensing requirements for food handling and provides some “best practices” to help prevent food from spreading illness to you, your staff and the children in care. We encourage you to use the guide to periodically assess the practices used in your center to ensure safe food handling and preparation.

Food safety practices that are required by the Child Care Center Home regulations are noted with the regulation section in parentheses. Child care facilities are exempt from the requirements of the California Uniform Retail Food Facilities Law (Health and Safety Code, Division 104, Part 7, Chapter 4).

At the back of the guide, we have attached charts on food cooking temperatures and food cold storage that can help you ensure safe cooking and storage of food in your child care center.

SAFE SHOPPING

- Do not buy or use meat, poultry and meat products unless they have been inspected. (Section 101227)
- Do not use or buy home canned food from outside sources, food from dented, rusted, bulging, or leaking cans, or food from cans without labels. (Section 101227)
- Do not buy or use raw or non-pasteurized milk or milk products, or non-pasteurized juices. (Section 101227)
- Place frozen food and perishables such as meat, poultry or fish in plastic bags and put them in the shopping cart last.
- Do not buy torn or leaking packages.
- Do not buy foods past “sell-by” or expiration dates.

SAFE STORAGE OF FOODS

- Keep your refrigerator and freezer clean and in safe condition. (Section 101227)
- Store soaps, detergents, cleaning compounds or similar substances away from food supplies to prevent accidental poisoning, potential leakage problems, and contamination. Always keep these substances away from children. (Section 101227)
- Do not store pesticides and other similar toxic substances where you store, cook or prepare food, or where you store kitchen equipment or utensils. Always keep these substances away from children. (Section 101227)
- Unpack perishable foods from the car first and put them in the refrigerator right away.
- Keep the refrigerator temperature at 40° F or less, and the freezer at 0° F, to slow the growth of most bacteria and keep them from multiplying.
- Check the temperature of your refrigerator and freezer daily with an appliance thermometer.
- Keep all food stored in the refrigerator and freezer covered, wrapped, stored in airtight containers, or otherwise protected from contamination.
- Wrap raw meat, poultry, and seafood securely to prevent raw juices from contaminating other foods. Store them in the meat drawer or coldest section of the refrigerator or freezer.
- Do not store perishable foods, such as eggs, in the refrigerator door. The temperature of storage bins in the door fluctuates more than the temperature in the cabinet.
- Cook or freeze fresh poultry, fish, ground meat, and mixed meats within 2 days after you buy them. Cook or freeze other beef, veal, lamb or pork within 3 to 5 days.
- Store food that does not need refrigeration in a way to keep insects and rodents from entering the food. For example, keep storage containers off the floor.
- Store dry, bulk foods that are not in their original, unopened containers off the floor in clean metal, glass, or food grade plastic containers with tight fitting covers. Label and date the containers.
- Keep storerooms clean, dry, well ventilated, and cool (about 60° F).

FOOD BROUGHT FROM HOME

- Label breast milk with the infant's name and date, and refrigerate or freeze it right away. (Section 101427)

- Label food brought by parents with the child's name and date, and store it in the refrigerator when needed.
- Do not give food brought from one child's home to another child.
- Never give breast milk intended for one infant to another infant.
- Do not store breast milk, unless already frozen, overnight. Always send unused breast milk home with the infant.
- Do not store defrosted breast milk for more than 12 hours. Never refreeze breast milk.
- Throw away bottles of formula or breast milk that are not finished after a feeding. Do not refrigerate, reheat or serve them again.

SAFE FOOD PREPARATION

- Keep all kitchen equipment, dishes, and utensils clean and in safe condition. (Section 101227)
- Wash dishes and eating and serving utensils in a dishwasher (reach a temperature of 165° F during the washing or drying cycle) or by hand with a sanitizing agent. (Section 101227)
- Keep the food preparation area separate from the eating, napping, play, toilet and bathroom areas, and from areas where animals are kept. Never use the food preparation area as a passageway while food is being prepared. (Section 101227)
- Make sure that all staff wash their hands before preparing food, serving and eating meals and snacks, and after toileting, diapering and outdoor activities. The best way to combat the spread of communicable disease or germs is by careful handwashing with liquid soap, rinsing under running water, and drying with paper towels.
- Do not wash hands in food preparation sinks to prevent contamination of food.
- Keep all surfaces that come in contact with food (including tables and countertops), floors, and shelving in good repair. Use smooth and nonporous materials that are easily cleaned and sanitized.
- Use cutting boards that can be disinfected (such as glass, Formica, or plastic). Always clean them with soap and hot water after each use.
- Do not use cutting boards with crevices and cuts because they can hide food material that can grow bacteria and contaminate the next food cut on the surface.

- Always clean and sanitize cutting boards, knives and other utensils after they come in contact with raw meat, poultry and seafood. Use one cutting board for raw meat products and another for salads and ready-to-eat foods to prevent cross contamination of bacteria from one food to another.
- Air-dry hand washed dishes to eliminate recontamination from hands or towels.
- Use dishes with smooth, hard-glazed surfaces that do not have cracks or chips.
- Clean and sanitize table surfaces before and after use.
- Sanitize kitchen dishcloths and sponges often because these materials can hide bacteria and promote their growth.
- Wash kitchen towels and cloths often in hot water in the washing machine.
- Clean the can opener blade after each use.
- Keep garbage in a covered container, away from children. Empty the garbage every day to reduce odors, control insects and rodents, and protect children and the child care center from contamination.
- Occasionally sanitize the kitchen sink, drain, disposal and connecting pipe by pouring a solution of one teaspoon of chlorine bleach in one quart of water or a commercial cleaning solution down the drain.
- Wash fresh fruits and vegetables with water, and soap and scrub brush when needed, to reduce or eliminate any pesticides or residues.
- Do not allow infants and toddlers in the food preparation area to protect them from kitchen hazards.

THAWING FOOD SAFELY

- Do not thaw meat, poultry, and fish products on the counter or sink because harmful bacteria can grow at room temperature.
- Thaw food in the refrigerator or microwave oven.
- Immediately cook food thawed in the microwave.
- Use defrosted food (cooked or frozen) within 1 to 2 days.

SAFE COOKING

- Cook ground meats to 160° F; ground poultry to 165° F; beef, veal and lamb steaks, roasts, and chops up to 145° F; all cuts of fresh pork to 160° F; whole poultry to 180° F in the thigh; and breasts up to 170° F. Use a meat thermometer to determine the temperature in the thickest part of the meat.

- Never serve raw or slightly cooked eggs. Cook eggs until the white is firm and the yolk begins to harden. Substitute pasteurized eggs for raw eggs if sampling homemade dough, cake batter, or eating other foods made with raw eggs such as ice cream, mayonnaise and eggnog.

SERVING FOOD SAFELY

- Keep hot foods hot (over 140° F) and cold food cold (under 40° F) until they are eaten or cooked.
- Carry perishable picnic food in a cooler with a cold pack or ice. Store the cooler in the shade and open it as little as possible.
- Do not leave cooked, perishable foods, including hot foods such as soups or sauces, out for more than two hours after cooking (one hour in temperatures over 90° F). The bacteria that cause food borne illness grow rapidly at room temperature.
- Never offer foods that are round, hard, small, thick and sticky, smooth, or slippery to children under four years of age because they can cause choking. Hot dogs (sliced into rounds), whole grapes, hard candy, nuts, seeds, raw peas, dried fruit, pretzels, chips, peanuts, popcorn, marshmallows, spoonfuls of peanut butter, and chunks of meat, which are larger than can be swallowed whole are examples of foods that can cause choking.
- Cut food into small pieces for infants (¼ inch) and toddlers (½ inch).
- Do not use microwave ovens for warming infant bottles and infant food because the microwave can heat liquids or food unevenly and to scalding temperatures. The milk or formula in a microwaved bottle may reach a higher temperature than the outside of the bottle.

HANDLING LEFTOVERS SAFELY

- Divide large amounts of leftovers (for example, large cuts of meat or poultry) into smaller portions and place them in shallow containers before refrigerating for faster cooling.
- Use refrigerated leftovers within three to four days or discard them.
- Bring sauces, soups, and gravy to a boil when reheating. Heat other leftovers to 165° F.

COOKING TEMPERATURE CHART

The following is a listing of the minimum temperatures that foods must reach to be considered safe and done, no matter how you prepare them.

<u>Food Product</u>	<u>Internal Temperature</u>
Fresh Ground beef, veal, lamb and pork:	160° F
Beef, veal, lamb (roasts, steaks, chops)	
▪ Medium rare	145° F
▪ Medium	160° F
▪ Well done	170° F
Fresh Pork (roasts, steaks, chops)	
▪ Medium	160° F
▪ Well done	170° F
Ham, cook before eating:	160° F
Ham, reheat fully cooked:	140° F
Poultry	
▪ Ground chicken, turkey	165° F
▪ Whole chicken, turkey	180° F
▪ Breasts, roasts	170° F
Stuffing, alone or in bird:	165° F
Egg dishes, casseroles	160° F
Leftovers, to reheat	165° F

Source: Food Safety and Inspection Service, United States Department of Agriculture

COLD STORAGE CHART

Since product dates aren't a guide for safe use of a product, consult this chart and follow these tips. These short but safe time limits will help keep refrigerated food (40° F) from spoiling or becoming dangerous.

- Purchase the product before "sell-by" or expiration dates.
- Follow handling recommendations on product.
- Keep meat and poultry in its package until just before using.
- If freezing meat and poultry in its original package longer than 2 months, overwrap these packages with airtight heavy-duty foil, plastic wrap, or freezer paper, or place the package inside a plastic bag.

Because freezing (0° F) keeps food safe indefinitely, recommended storage times are for quality only.

Product	Refrigerator	Freezer	Product	Refrigerator	Freezer
Eggs			Hot Dogs & Lunch Meats		(in freezer wrap)
Fresh, in shell	3 weeks	Don't freeze	Hot dogs, opened package	1 week	1 to 2 months
Raw yolks, whites	2 to 4 days	1 year	unopened package	2 weeks	1 to 2 months
Hard cooked	1 week	Don't freeze well	Lunch meats, opened package	3 to 5 days	1 to 2 months
Liquid pasteurized eggs			unopened package	2 weeks	1 to 2 months
or egg substitutes, opened	3 days	Don't freeze	Soups & Stews		
Unopened	10 days	1 year	Vegetable or meat-added	3 to 4 days	2 to 3 months
Mayonnaise, commercial			Bacon & Sausage		
Refrigerate after opening	2 months	Don't freeze	Bacon	7 days	1 month
TV Dinners, Frozen Casseroles			Sausage, raw from pork, beef, chicken or turkey	1 to 2 days	1 to 2 months
Keep frozen until ready to eat		3 to 4 months	Smoked breakfast links, patties	7 days	1 to 2 months
Deli & Vacuum-Packed Products			Summer sausage labeled		
Store-prepared (or homemade) egg, chicken, tuna, ham, macaroni salads	3 to 5 days	Don't freeze well	"Keep Refrigerated," unopened	3 months	1 to 2 months
Pre-stuffed pork & lamb chops, chicken breasts stuffed w/ dressing	1 day	Don't freeze well	opened	3 weeks	1 to 2 months
Store-cooked convenience meals	3 to 4 days	Don't freeze well	Fresh Meat (Beef, Veal, Lamb & Pork)		
Commercial brand vacuum-packed dinners w/ USDA seal, unopened	2 weeks	Don't freeze well	Steaks	3 to 5 days	6 to 12 months
Raw Hamburger, Ground & Stew Meat			Chops	3 to 5 days	4 to 6 months
Hamburger & stew meats	1 to 2 days	3 to 4 months	Roasts	3 to 5 days	4 to 12 months
Ground turkey, veal, pork, lamb & mixtures of them	1 to 2 days	3 to 4 months	Variety meats (tongue, kidneys, liver, heart, chitterlings)	1 to 2 days	3 to 4 months
Ham, Corned Beef			Meat Leftovers		
Corned beef in pouch with pickling juices	5 to 7 days	Drained, 1 month	Cooked meat and meat dishes	3 to 4 days	2 to 3 months
Ham, canned, labeled			Gravy and meat broth	1 to 2 days	2 to 3 months
"Keep Refrigerated," unopened	6 to 9 months	Don't freeze	Fresh Poultry		
opened	3 to 5 days	1 to 2 months	Chicken or turkey, whole	1 to 2 days	1 year
Ham, fully cooked, whole	7 days	1 to 2 months	Chicken or turkey, parts	1 to 2 days	9 months
Ham, fully cooked, half	3 to 5 days	1 to 2 months	Giblets	1 to 2 days	3 to 4 months
Ham, fully cooked, slices	3 to 4 days	1 to 2 months	Cooked Poultry, Leftover		
			Fried chicken	3 to 4 days	4 months
			Cooked poultry dishes	3 to 4 days	4 to 6 months
			Pieces, plain	3 to 4 days	4 months
			Pieces covered with broth, gravy	1 to 2 days	6 months
			Chicken nuggets, patties	1 to 2 days	1 to 3 months

Source: Food Safety and Inspection Service, United States Department of Agriculture